

Scott, Daniel, House (Valmont)
E side State Rte. 726
Scottsville
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS VA-1001

HABS,
VA,

2-SCOTT.S.V.
1-

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

REDUCED DRAWINGS

Addendum to
Daniel Scott House (Valmont)
Warren Road
Scottsville vicinity
Albemarle County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1001

HABS
VA,
2-SCOTS.V
1-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DANIEL SCOTT HOUSE (VALMONT)

HABS No. VA-1001

HABS
VA
2-SCOTS
V31-

Location: Warren Road, Route 726, one mile west of
Scottsville, Albemarle County, Virginia.

Present owner: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Duff

Present occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Duff

Present use: Dwelling

Statement of significance: The original structure is a
typical 18th century house with two rooms
below, two above and an English basement.
It probably served as the temporary first
courthouse of Albemarle County and was as
well the home of several men prominent in
the early history of Scottsville.

Part I - Historical Information

A. Physical history

1. Original and subsequent owners

Goochland County

1737 Will of Edward Scott recorded February 10 in
Will book 3, page 107
to Daniel "my land at Totter....
containing 500 acres"

Albemarle County

1798 Will of John Scott recorded February 23 in
Will book 4, page 1
to grandson John "all my lands on
James River in counties of Albemarle
and Fluvanna," "plantation utensils
on that part of tract which lies below
the mouth of Totter Creek"

1821 Deed recorded October 17 in
Deed book 26, page 178
John Scott
to
William Moon
655 acres

1825 Deed recorded March 4 in
Deed book 25, page 148
William Moon
to
Charles Locke and George M. Payne, trustees
655 acres

1825 Deed recorded March 4 in
Deed book 28, page 24
Charles Locke and George M. Payne
to
Peyton Harrison
655 acres at public auction

1833 Deed recorded December 25 in
Deed book 31, page 517
Peyton Harrison
to
Carter Harrison
626 acres; "where the said Peyton and June
Cary have lately and for several years
past resided"

- 1841 Deed recorded January 11 in
Deed book 38, page 489
Carter Harrison
to
Thomas Burton
526 acres; "that tract of land called Valmont"
- 1841 Deed recorded January 23 in
Deed book 38, page 477
Thomas Burton
to
G. M. Lewis and George W. Randolph, trustees
526 acres
- 1844 Deed recorded July 13 in
Deed book 42, pages 80,468
George W. Randolph(surviving trustee)
to
James M. Garnett
508 acres at public auction
- 1846 Deed recorded November 15 in
Deed book 47, page 513
George W. Randolph
to
James M. Garnett
completion of terms of sale
- 1852 Deed recorded September 1 in
Deed book 51, page 210
James M. Garnett
to
John Gantt
508 acres
- 1870 Deed recorded September 2 in
Deed book 65, page 414
Henry Gantt
to
John S. White, F. S. Durrant and W. W. Brown,
trustees
508 acres; "bought by Doctor John Gantt
....called Belmont and inherited by
said Henry Gantt"
lists five dwelling houses, barn, stables
- 1886 Deed recorded April 24 in
Deed book 86, page 105
Fattie Gantt
to
Thomas Martin, trustee

- 1886 Deed recorded April 24 in
Deed book 86, page 104
Thomas Martin, trustee
to
Fattie Gantt
508 acres at public auction
- 1887 Deed recorded April 9 in
Deed book 88, page 2
Fattie Gantt
to
Thomas Martin, trustee
508 acres; "owned by late Henry Gantt
at time of his death"
to secure debt to Pitts and Dourier
- 1895 Deed recorded January 23 in
Deed book 102, page 491
Thomas Martin, trustee
to
D. H. Pitts and William Dourier
508 acres at public auction
- 1908 Deed recorded July 1 in
Deed book 140, page 257
William S. Dourier
to
D. H. Pitts
half share of Valmont "upon which D. H. Pitts
now resides"
- 1928 Deed recorded November 9 in
Deed book 203, page 59
D. H. Pitts
to
Scottsville National Bank
509 acres - bankruptcy action
- 1930 Deed recorded June 25 in
Deed book 209, page 309
Scottsville National Bank
to
L. R. Stinson
509 acres
- 1932 Deed recorded April 2 in
Deed book 215, page 580
L. R. Stinson
to
Nannie Stinson
509 acres

- 1932 Deed recorded April 7 in
Deed book 235, page 114
Nannie Stinson
to
L. R. Stinson
509 acres
- 1958 Deed recorded March 1 in
Deed book 338, page 449
L. R. Stinson
to
J. L. Gardner
509 acres
- 1962 Deed recorded July 10 in
Deed book 380, page 377
J. L. Gardner
to
Leith Bremner
509 acres
- 1965 Deed recorded June 29 in
Deed book 408, page 532
Leith Bremner
to
J. L. Gardner and Forrest E. Paulett
509 acres
- 1966 Deed recorded May 31 in
Deed book 419, page 195
J. L. Gardner
to
Forrest E. Paulett
partner share relinquished
509 acres
- 1973 Deed recorded November 30 in
Deed book 541, page 563
Forrest E. Paulett
to
Leonard Land and Livestock, LTD., and
Chester F. Baker
503 acres
- 1974 Deed recorded November 26 in
Deed book 565, page 119
Leonard Land and Livestock LTD.
to
Richard M. Duff Jr. and Julie S. Duff

2. Date of erection: approximately 1740
3. Architect: unknown
4. Alterations and additions:

The original structure had an English basement, two rooms on the first floor and two rooms on the second. A major addition occurred around 1800 providing an extra room on each level. Many other alterations have occurred through time. On the original structure, a rear porch was added, and much later enclosed. A small front porch was removed and replaced by a succession of larger ones. A room was added on the rear of the first floor of the addition and the connection between the two blocks was enlarged. Alterations will be discussed more specifically in Part II.

B. Historical events and persons connected with the structure

The early history of the 18th century house now known as Valmont is inseparable from the history of Scottsville and Albemarle County in this period. Built on the bluffs overlooking the Horseshoe Bend of the James River at Scottsville, the house passed through four generations of the family for whom the town was named.

The original tract of land on which the house was built - 550 acres on the James River at the mouth of Totter Creek - was patented by Edward Scott in 1732.¹ In a will recorded in Goochland County and dated June 1729 (Will book 1, page 205), Edward Scott is identified as one of four brothers: John, the eldest and testator of the will, who died childless; Samuel, Edward, and Joseph, the youngest.

From the early records of Goochland County Edward emerges as an important figure. In the original commission of the county signed by Governor William Gooch and dated 1728, Edward Scott is named as one of the first justices.² He was moreover, a major land owner and was involved in numerous land transactions in the following decade³, as well as many civil suits before the Goochland County court.⁴ In 1735 he was granted a license to operate a ferry on the James River at what is now Mannakin, Virginia⁵.

and in 1736 he contracted to build the Goochland County prison at Mannakin.⁶ Finally, his obituary in the Virginia Gazette, March 24, 1737, identified him as a current member of the Virginia House of Burgesses.⁷

The will of Edward Scott, recorded in Goochland County and dated February 10, 1737 (Will book 3, page 107), is important in speculation about Valmont. The will identifies Edward's family as follows: a wife Ann, older son Daniel, younger son John and daughter Frances. To Daniel he left "this land whereon I now live in Mannakin Town," as well as, "my land at Totier....containg 500 acres." On the basis of these comments, as well as his activities in Mannakin, it can be assumed first, that Edward Scott never lived at Totier Creek, and second, that Valmont, at this time (1737), probably had not yet been built.

On September 4, 1744 Goochland County was partitioned, and from its western section Albemarle County was created. The organizing meeting of Albemarle County took place on February 28, 1745. The notes from this meeting, the first court session recorded in the Albemarle County Order Book, suggest that by this time Valmont did exist at Totier, for it is noted that the next session of court the following month "will be held at Mr. Scott's plantation at Totier."

It is likely then that between 1737 and 1745, Daniel Scott, eldest son of Edward, left the family home in Mannakin and built a new house on the tract of land at Totier Creek, and that this house then served as a temporary courthouse until the completion of the new courthouse approximately two years later. The process of building a new courthouse had begun almost immediately. In the record of the May 23, 1745 session of the Albemarle court (page 20) it is stated that "Samuel Scott, son of Edward Scott deceased, proposes to build a courthouse, stocks and pillory at his own proper costs," and in the June 27, 1745 record (page 22) it is noted that the courthouse, to be completed by the last day of June, 1747, shall be located "at such place as the justices of Albemarle shall choose on the land of Daniel Scott, son of Edward Scott, deceased." While the reference to Samuel as the son of Edward is puzzling since Edward's will does not mention a son by that name (this is probably Edward's brother Samuel), it is clear that the new courthouse was built in the vicinity of the present house at Valmont.

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The July 25, 1745 court record (page 33) contains the following two notices: "On the motion of Daniel Scott leave is given him to keep a ferry from the Court House landing to the opposite side," and "On the motion of Daniel Scott leave is given him to keep an ordinary at the court house." In the January 24, 1746 court record (page 11, appendix) and yearly thereafter, the following notice appears: "to be paid by Publick....to Daniel Scott, for keeping a ferry at the courthouse....1000 lbs. of tobacco." Thus, as county seat, there grew, in the vicinity of Valmont and the courthouse, a community which became known as Scott's Landing.

In 1761, Buckingham County was created from that part of Albemarle County lying south of the James River, leaving Scott's Landing isolated on the southern edge of the county. As a result, the County court was moved in 1765 to a more central position in the new town of Charlottesville, leaving the courthouse at Valmont abandoned.⁸

It is said that the addition to Valmont was built from timbers taken from the abandoned courthouse around 1800 and several carefully chamfered posts and beams in its basement which have obviously been cut to fit new circumstances tend to support this idea. It is also said that Lafayette visited Valmont in 1824 in commemoration of an heroic and crucial Revolutionary War action in which militia supplies kept in the abandoned courthouse were saved from the British.⁹

In 1789 a petition for the incorporation of Scott's Landing presented to the Virginia Assembly by John Scott was rejected.¹⁰ In his will recorded in Albemarle County and dated February 23, 1798 (Will book 4, page 1), John Scott is identified as the son of Edward Scott and brother of Daniel. A reference to land "that descended to me from my father and brother" indicates that Daniel by this time had died, with no will recorded, and that ownership of Valmont had passed to John. He in turn left to his grandson John III and the child's mother Elizabeth a tract of land below the mouth of Totter Creek and the use, during her widowhood, "of the dwelling house and offices wherein her late husband resided," a probable reference to Valmont. It was John Scott III then, who in 1821 sold Valmont to William Koon, and it was the same John Scott who in 1818 successfully petitioned the Virginia Assembly for the incorporation of Scottsville.¹¹

The growth of Scottsville included the annexation in 1831 of twenty-one acres known as "Harrison's Addition." The owner, Peyton Harrison, was also at this time owner and resident of Valmont.

In a deed recorded in 1841 the name "Valmont" which is now generally associated with the house appears for the first time in reference to the entire 526 acre farm. The name is repeated in all subsequent deeds with the exception of an 1870 deed which identifies the property as "Belmont."

The following notes provide insight into the more recent history of Valmont. They were written by Mrs. Stella Pitts Pruett, whose father, D. H. Pitts purchased Valmont with William Dourier in 1895.

"The oldest house on Valmont was probably a small one room log cabin in the woods between Valmont and Bellehaven on the hill above the dam. Made of logs with pine floor, rock fireplace, its small windows had rotted solid wood shutters and door was heavy wood with a wooden bar that latched into a support on each side of door. Sixty years ago when David and I played Indians there it was ready to fall down.

To the left of the front of the "old court house" and down the hill from it was a group of Walnut trees - the remnants of a rock foundation under them were pointed out to me as where the old County jail had been.

Beside the left wing of the O.C.H. was a mounting block that was put there for the benefit of Madison who was a short man. A matching block formed the front step of the house known as "Old Valmont."

Colonel Henry Gantt was a native of Maryland. He lived near Annapolis and was disturbed by gathering war clouds from the North and the South. Wishing to put his wife (and family?) into a safer place, he purchased Valmont. He moved his people and his slaves and his stock overland from Maryland to this refuge.

Aunt Mary Johnson who lived in a cabin on the old Snapp place was one of the slaves I knew who made the journey. She died, very old, in the 1920's. Her daughters, Mary Johnson and Arie worked around town

for years. Arie worked for the Mason Dillards.

During the Civil War troops of the North camped on the low grounds and meadows twice. Once Stoneman, Once Sheridan. When Colonel Gantt came home from the war, he found his wife, an invalid by then, living in the overseer's house. One of the additions for her comfort was a small green house next to her bedroom. There were several magnificent magnolia trees in front of this and slightly to the side of them were nine or ten graves, marked only by small, fragrant jonquils in the spring. The U.D.C. made plans and got records together many times to mark these graves but no marker had been put up thro 1929.

The Manor house (built by whom? destroyed how?) was about 300 yards southwest of Old Valmont, on the far side of the farm road. Terraces of blackberry and pines and weeds blossomed in the spring and early summer with single roses, moss roses, lilies, shrubs and horwood struggled around the old foundation and one lilac bush had survived.

Pitts and Dourier bought Valmont in the 1890's and raised horses. Billy Garth trained the best - some won fame as steeplechasers. Imperialis won the queen's cup at Toronto and was a noted Stallion of his day. Others were trained for flat racing, for pleasure riding, for hunting and many were sold for polo ponies. In 1918, Leake Pitts bought the last forty brood mares and colts and moved them to Elk Hill.

I was born at Old Valmont in 1907, my father having bought out Mr. Dourier around 1903. When we moved to New Valmont about 1908 or nine, my mother found an officer's sword in a concealed closet close to the mantel of the room next to the little green house. Papa got in touch with various people and finally found a relative of Colonel Gantt who came to get it. I think it was a nephew.

The hedges on the farm were mock orange and covered with Virginia Creeper and honeysuckle. A few of the pastures still had rail roads. Everywhere were fruit trees, lines of tulip poplars, hickory, walnut and beech. Wild geraniums, ladyslippers, yellow violets, periwinkles and chinquapins, hollies and rare trees of red currants. Deer and foxes were seen in the winter."

Footnotes

¹Moore, Virginia. Scottsville on the James, Jarman Press
1969, p. 2.

²Ibid, p. 2

³Goochland County Deed Books: D.E. 1, pp. 26, 46, 74, 97, 100,
103, 203, 205, 319, 376, 421. D.E. 2, pp. 58, 100, 119, 174, 185,
186.

⁴Goochland County Order Books: 1728-1730, pp. 16, 22,
32, 42, 54, 62, 67, 74, 116, 117, 145, 170; 1730-1731, pp. 115, 120,
131, 144, 147, 148, 166, 167, 174, 187, 188; 1735-1741, p. 47

⁵Ibid, 1735-1741 p. 47

⁶Ibid, book 2, p. 60

⁷Virginia Historical Magazine, vol. 33, pp. 37-38.

⁸Moore, op cit, p. 29.

⁹Ibid, p. 53.

¹⁰Ibid, p. 50

¹¹Ibid, p. 50

C. Sources of Information

Albemarle County: First Order Book
Deed Books
Will Books

Goochland County: Order Books
Deed Books
Will Books

Gwathmey, John H., Twelve Virginia Counties, Dietz
Press, Richmond, Virginia 1937.

Moore, Virginia, Scottsville on the James, Jarman
Press, Charlottesville, Virginia 1969.

Rawlings, Mary, Ante-bellum Albemarle, Charlottes-
ville, Virginia 1935

Virginia Historical Magazine

Letter: Mrs. Stella Pitts Pruett

Part II - Architectural Information

A. General statement

1. Architectural character: An excellent example of the 18th century vernacular house, with steeply pitched roof, flanking chimneys and simple details.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Original structure - approximately 28' x 18'. With all subsequent additions, the house is presently 28' - 11" x 58' - 11". The original structure and the 1800 addition are both two stories, with basement, while the connection between the pieces occurs only at the first floor.
2. Foundations: Original structure - random stone; the west wall has been extensively patched in brick; the north wall has been replaced with concrete block.
Addition - brick; north and south walls have been replaced with concrete block
3. Walls: Beaded weatherboard, painted white.
4. Structural system: Heavy timber, hand hewn; mortise and tenon joints; L - shaped corner posts carved from single timber.
5. Porches: Original structure - a small entry porch indicated by a notch in the cornice over the door has long been removed; a porch added to the rear has recently been enclosed.
6. Chimneys: Original structure - flanking chimneys, probably symmetrical originally; the east chimney has been replaced by a smaller one; the west chimney has recently been carefully rebuilt following a structural failure; American bond.
Addition - a chimney on the eastern end has also been carefully rebuilt following the recent collapse of the original.
7. Openings
 - a. Doors, doorways: Original structure - wooden, six panelled door; notches at door lintel

height in the framing on the east end suggest that two doors flanked the chimney on the main floor, one with access to the outside, the other with access to a small addition to the side; at the rear, the basement is on ground level with one door. Addition - entry occurs in connection between the original structure and the 1800 addition; door to basement at rear.

- b. Windows: Original structure - first floor, wooden double hung six-over-six sash windows; second floor, wooden double hung four-over-four sash windows; a dormer added over the entry is also a six-over-six wooden double hung window; windows to the English basement have been bricked in; windows on the rear of the house are modern. Addition - first floor, six-over-nine wooden double hung windows; second floor east end, wooden fixed windows with four lights; west end, wooden double hung six-over-six windows; windows in the basement, on the rear of the addition and in the connection are modern.

- 8. Roof: Original structure and addition - steeply pitched with slate covering. Rear slope of roof of connection and lean-to on addition is standing seam metal.

C. Description of the interior

1. Floor plans

- a. Basement: Original structure - one room with fireplace on west end; central entry. Addition - one room with fireplace, now closed. Crawl space under connector.
- b. First floor: Original structure - two rooms; entry occurs in larger room on the west, under descending stair; smaller room on the east; both rooms have access to recent porch enclosure to rear. Addition - one room with fireplace and corner stairs; entry from connector, access to lean-to at rear.
- c. Second floor: Original structure - central stair hall between two symmetrical rooms; dormer space at head of stairs.

Addition - one room with stair, garrett rail on west end.

2. Stairways: Original structure - one central stair from first to second floor; framing evidence indicates this stair originally was L-shaped, turning into the west, or entry room.
Addition - one stair from first to second floor, L-shaped, turning into northwest corner of room.
3. Flooring: Wide hardwood flooring in original structure and addition; dirt in basement.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Original but badly deteriorated horse-hair reinforced plaster was recently removed from second floor rooms. All walls and ceilings are now painted gypsum board. Painted paneling to chair rail height occurs in first level of both the original structure and the addition.
5. Doorways and doors: Wooden six panelled doors with simple mouldings occur throughout.
6. Trim: Chair rails and baseboards occur in all original first floor rooms; baseboards occur in all second floor rooms.
7. Hardware: Box locks and iron hinges occur frequently.
8. Heating: Each room in the original structure and the addition has its own fireplace. Fireplaces on the east end of the original structure have been removed.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Valmont is situated on the bluffs west of Scottsville overlooking the Horseshoe Bend of the James River; it is surrounded by the farmland which comprised the original tract of 550 acres. The entry front faces south-southwest.
2. Outbuildings: A small two storey barn, approximately 12' x 12' stands to the rear of the house. Its heavy timber construction is similar to that of the house.

3. A graveyard is located on a terrace east of the house toward the river.

Part III - Project information

This project was undertaken by Robert Troxell, graduate student in architecture at the University of Virginia for the course "Measured Drawings: Studies in Vernacular Architecture," under the direction of K. Edward Lay, Associate Professor of Architecture.

This documentation was produced in 1975, and was donated to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). The documentation was not produced under the supervision of HABS, nor has it been edited by HABS staff.